

Should parents make will equal?

Dear Annie: My wife of 44 years and I have two adopted children. Our son was perfect — no trouble, a college diploma, a good job, etc. We bought him a car at 16, and another when he graduated college. We helped with the furniture for his first apartment. We loaned him the down payment on his house and he paid us back.

Our daughter, however, was a challenge. She abused drugs, had no interest in school, ran away, had multiple out-of-wedlock pregnancies, couldn't hold a job and ended up in jail for shoplifting. Over the years, we spent thousands of dollars on counseling, purchased multiple apartments of furniture when she was trying to get re-established, and have given her a dozen cars so that she could get to her job interviews. Fortunately, she seems to have finally turned the corner and has been married several years to a guy who treats her and her children well.

In an effort to equalize the disproportional amount spent on the daughter, we specified in our will that our son would get 60 percent of our estate, putting 40 percent in a trust, so our daughter would get the interest and the rest would go to her children at her death. She

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



still doesn't work, and I am concerned that she would go through a lump sum inheritance in short order.

That split seemed reasonable when we made our wills 15 years ago, but my business has continued to grow and today that split would result in one child receiving \$2.4 million more than the other. I don't want a rift between siblings and I don't particularly want to be remembered by one as a Grinch. Any suggestions on a split that is a little closer to fair? — *Your Opinion Please*

Dear Opinion: We know you spent more on your daughter, but children's expenses rarely end up being equal, so the split now seems as though you are punishing her for past mistakes. And her money is in a trust, so it is essentially going to your grandchildren.

Too many people think of wills as a way to punish or reward their relatives. Please don't. The amount is generous enough that neither child is going to suffer. We also recommend you discuss these things with your son and daughter in advance, so that there are no unpleasant surprises.

Dear Annie: "Stressed on the Line" said her mother has hearing problems, among other things. For a long time, I refused the idea of hearing aids, and my husband and children were insistent. Well, I finally broke down and got them. I have to say, they are wonderful. I can hear again, and as a big plus, they are so small that very few people notice them, even though I have short hair.

I hope her mother will get hearing aids. She will wonder why she waited so long. — *Happy in Wisconsin*

Dear Happy: Good for you. Often, people refuse hearing aids for reasons of vanity, which is ridiculous since they now offer ones that are barely noticeable. However, a more justifiable reason is the cost. We hope folks will consider them to be an investment in their future physical, emotional and mental health.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're not worried about whether or not you can rise to the occasion of what's expected of you because you've already come to expect so much more from yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are times when getting ready for the event is just as fun as going to the event. Then there are times when it's way more fun, which may be the case in the upcoming deal. Enjoy all of today's preparations!

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There will be many different entities competing for your attention and only you know which needs it most — not necessarily the squeakiest wheel either. What's noisiest isn't automatically most important.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Opportunities seem to be rushing outside of your window, when in reality they are not. The chances worth taking are now, and have always been, inside you. Your potential can be activated at any moment you will it to be so.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). While some may be able to take comfort and heart in their associations, there is no security for you in the success of others. There's something in you that has to make it on your own. It is not in your nature to form dependencies.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You believe in and work toward a better life for all — not just a better life for you and yours. It is because of your broadminded efforts and elastic heart that you'll net fantastic fortunes today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You will achieve prominence in a community. This

could be a social club, party affiliation, on-line community or other. However it shows up, enjoy knowing that this comes with power and a responsibility that you won't take lightly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). When you hear yourself speaking what you don't mean or doing what you don't want to do, stop and consider what might be causing this duplicity. Once you figure it out, realign yourself properly. You'll be unstoppable.

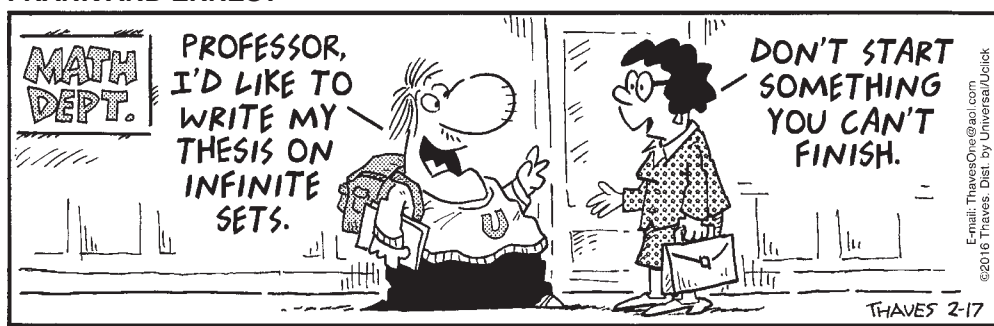
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The reason why you're able to let the good (or otherwise) opinions of others roll off your back is that your private rating system for yourself is far more stringent than anyone else's.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). What you know is enough. It's what you're supposed to know. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It won't highlight the holes in your knowledge, but it will fill them in.

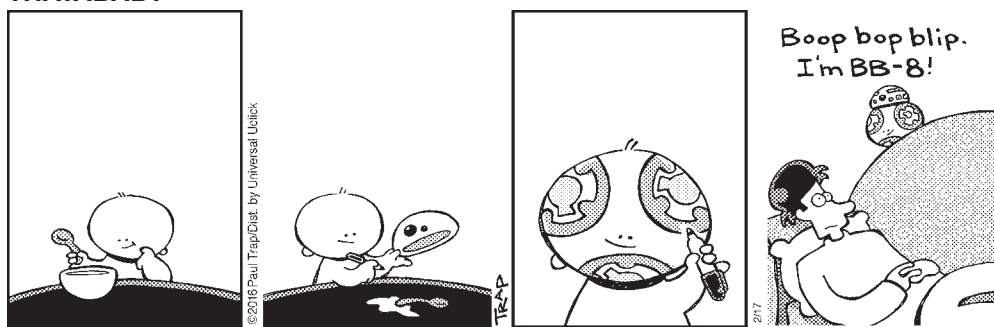
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The way you wish things were — that is a good starting place from which your creative brain can weave a little magic. So what would you ask that genie in a bottle for today?

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 18). You're a sponge for learning all you need to know to make a quantum leap into the life you've been dreaming of. You'll be educated by comfortable routines, and you'll be educated by swirls of excitement and adventure. The responsibility you claim in April will lead July's financial boon. An August wedding brings joy. Gemini and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 33, 28, 16 and 50.

FRANK AND ERNEST



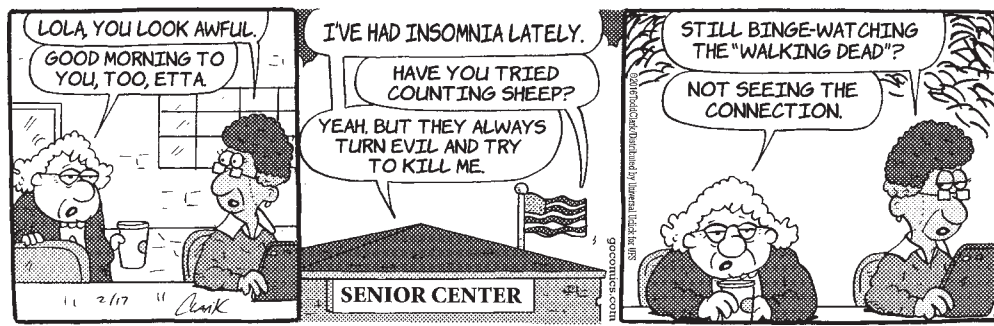
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



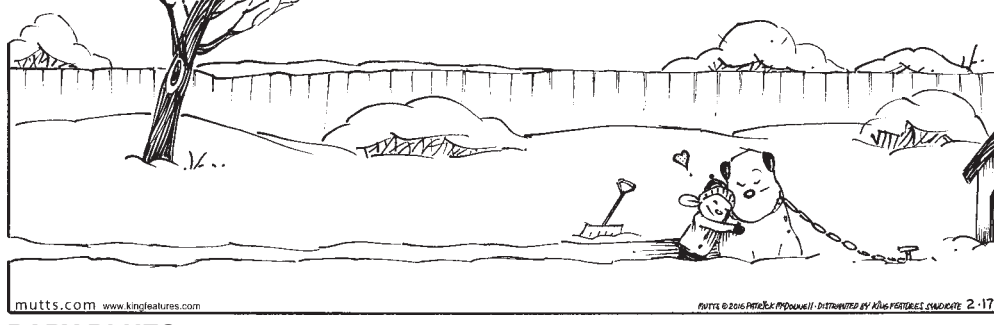
LOLA



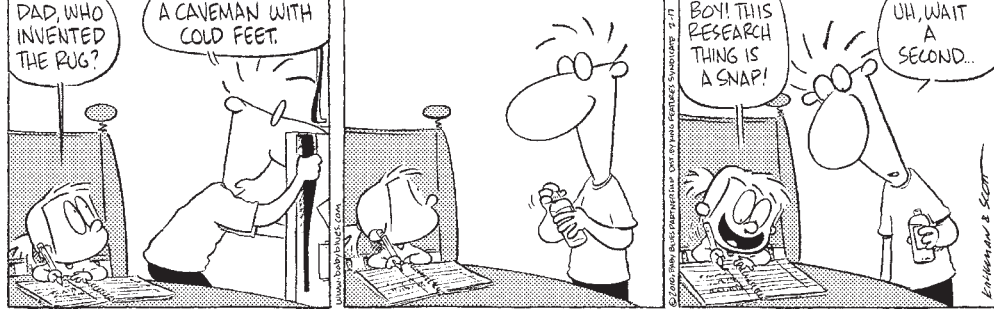
SIX CHIX



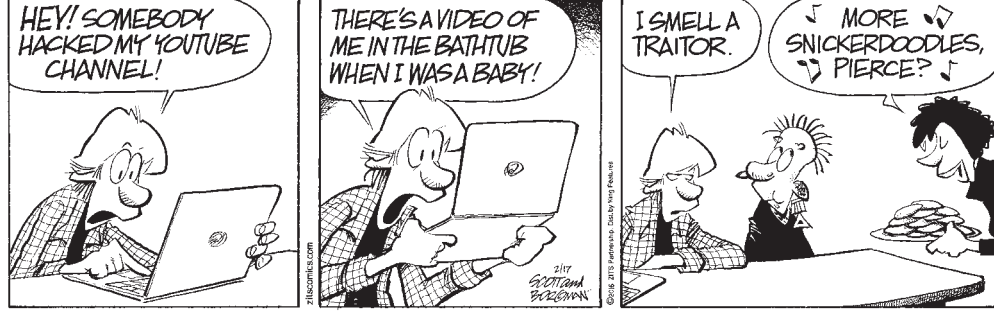
MUTTS



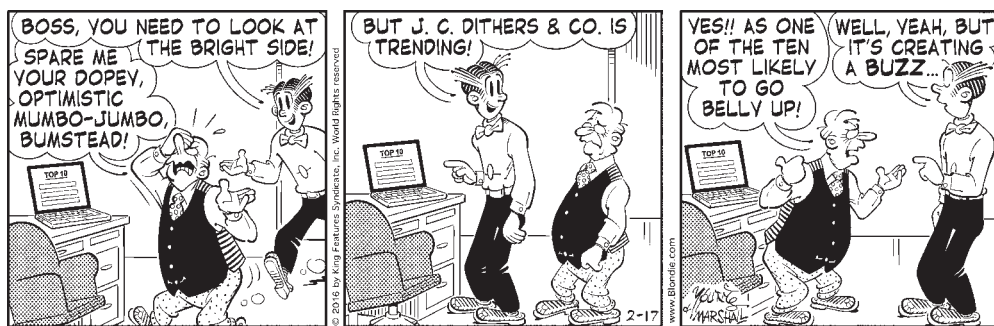
BABY BLUES



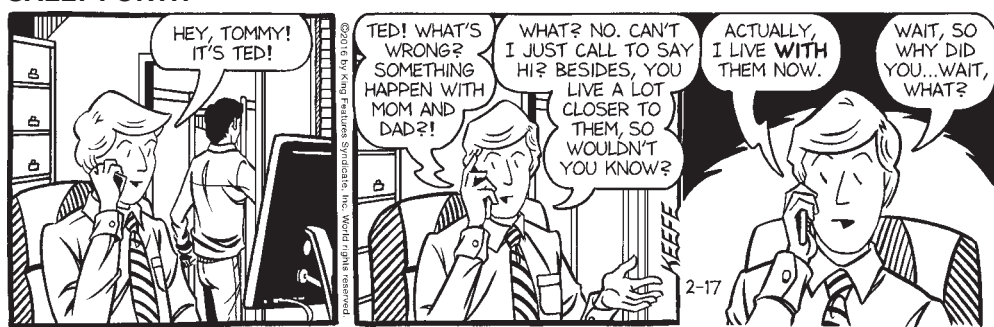
ZITS



BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



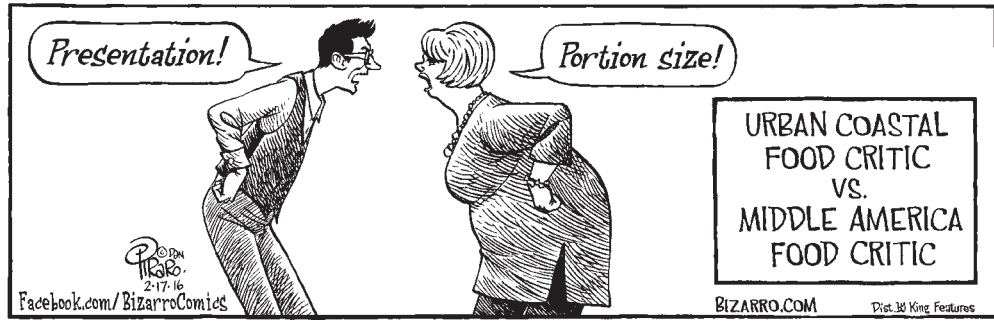
B.C.



DILBERT



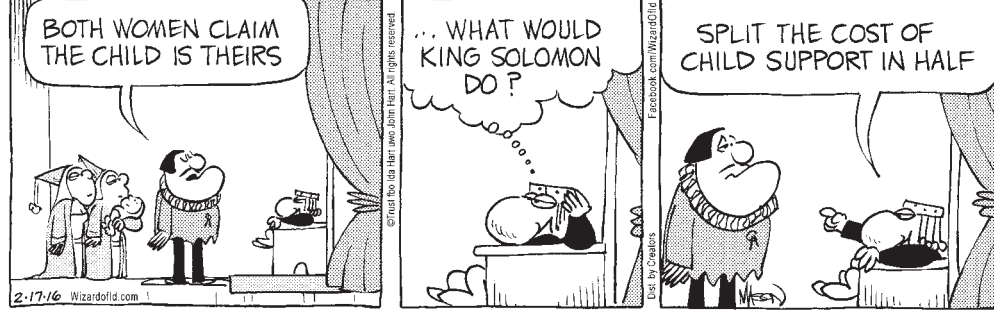
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

